



WISCONSIN STATE ASSEMBLY

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
KRISTEN DEXTER

68TH DISTRICT

**Testimony from Representative Kristen Dexter
March 25, 2010**

Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs
In support of AB 702

Chairman Hilgenberg, Committee members, thank you for convening today to hold this hearing on Assembly Bill 702 regarding the veterans' tuition reimbursement program.

This issue was brought to my attention when Gerald Setterlund, a constituent and Wisconsin veteran who served 13 years of active duty. He wrote my office and told of the difficulty he was having in qualifying for a Veterans Education Grant. Mr. Setterlund was enrolled as a full-time student and working a full-time job but because he has been out of the service for over ten years, he qualified for a tuition reimbursement grant of up to only 11 credits per semester. Mr. Setterlund was taking 12 credits and therefore was ineligible to receive a reimbursement of *any* kind.

The spirit of the Veterans Tuition Reimbursement Program is to assist Wisconsin veterans in enhancing their education but the current law hinders the effort of veterans like Mr. Setterlund. While the State wishes to provide veterans with a generous program like the Veterans Education Grant, it should not restrict a veteran's ambition. Mr. Setterlund, like many other veterans, is attending school full-time in order to earn his degree two years sooner than it would take him as a part-time student.

The State is currently willing to reimburse up to 11 credits those veterans who have been out of service for over ten years. Under this bill, a veteran would still be eligible for this reimbursement, regardless of the number of credits they are taking in a given semester. Veterans would then be responsible for paying for any credits beyond the 11 credit per semester reimbursement limit. Eleven credits remains the maximum number for which a veteran is eligible for reimbursement.

This bill maintains the same eligibility requirements and tuition reimbursement benefits that are currently in place for veterans, but gives veterans who have been out of service for over ten years the flexibility to return to school at their own pace. The passage of this bill would reaffirm and improve upon the State's commitment to providing veterans from Wisconsin with educational assistance upon returning home from active duty.

Again, I want to thank you all for convening today and holding this hearing on Assembly Bill 702. I hope we can work together to pass this bill.